

Message Text

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E.O. 11652: XGDS-3

TAGS: PFOR IS EG

SUBJ: ISRAELI CARGO THROUGH THE SUEZ CANAL

REF: EMBASSY 5894

1. AT DINNER LAST NIGHT ALLON AND I RESUMED OUR DISCUSSION OF THE PROBLEM OF ISRAELI CARGO TRANSIT OF CANAL. THE FOREIGN MINISTER SAID THAT HE HAD REPORTED TO RABIN ON OUR CONVERSATION AT THE SEA OF GALILEE ON TUESDAY; BOTH HE AND THE PRIME MINISTER REMAINED DISMAYED AT THE DIM PROSPECT OF EARLY COMPLIANCE BY THE EGYPTIANS WITH THEIR COMMITMENT, AND BOTH FEEL THAT WE SHOULD APPROACH SADAT DIRECT. ALLON ASKED ME TO CONVEY THIS TO THE SECRETARY AND RENEW HIS REQUEST THAT WE CONSIDER BYPASSING FAHMY AND RAISE PROBLEM WITH SADAT SOONEST.

2. I TOLD ALLON THAT, FOR REASON I SPELLED OUT ON TUESDAY, I FELT HIS SUGGESTION WAS UNREALISTIC AND I THOUGHT IT WAS UNWISE TO RAISE IT AGAIN. ALLON THEN SAID THAT RABIN WOULD FIND IT DIFFICULT IF NOT IMPOSSIBLE TO DEFEND THE CABINET SIGNATURE OF THE PROTOCOL IN GENEVA AND THE BEGINNING OF IMPLEMENTATION OF THE ISRAELI COMMITMENTS UNDER THE AGREEMENT WITHOUT EGYPTIAN COMPLIANCE WITH A COMMITMENT WHICH AFTER ALL GOES BACK TO THE FIRST DISENGAGEMENT AGREEMENT. ALLON SAID THAT SERIOUS THOUGHT IS NOW BEING GIVEN TO THE LEGAL IMPLICATIONS OF INITIALING THE PROTOCOL ON SATURDAY AND DELAYING SIGNATURE UNTIL CARGO PASSES THROUGH THE CANAL.

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3. WHILE ALLON ASSURED ME THAT NO FINAL POSITION HAD BEEN TAKEN

BY RABIN ON THE QUESTION, HIS REMARKS GAVE CLEAR INDICATION THAT THE PRIME MINISTER WOULD FIND IT DIFFICULT TO DEFEND RELIANCE ON FAHMY'S ASSURANCES AS RECOMMENDED BY WASHINGTON. I THINK WE MUST REALISTICALLY FACE THE PROSPECT OF CONSIDERABLE DELAY IN IMPLEMENTATION OF THE INTERIM AGREEMENT UNLESS THERE IS MOVEMENT BY THE EGYPTIANS ON THE CARGO QUESTION. CLEARLY WE FACE A DILEMMA. ON THE ONE HAND WE PRESS THE ISRAELIS TO EXPEDITE IMPLEMENTATION OF THEIR COMMITMENTS UNDER THE AGREEMENT IN ORDER TO SHORE UP SADAT'S POSITION; AND ON THE OTHER HAND WE ARE TELLING THE ISRAELIS THAT EGYPTIAN COMPLIANCE WITH THEIR END OF THE BARGAIN WHICH THE ISRAELIS REGARD AND HAVE SAID PUBLICLY IS A PRECONDITION FOR MOVEMENT IN THE SINAI, MUST BE DEFERRED.

4. IT OCCURES TO ME THAT ONE POSSIBLE WAY OUT IS TO MOVE WITH SADAT AS SUGGESTED BY ISRAELIS AND USE THIS AS LEVERAGE TO SATISFY EGYPTIAN DESIDERATA IN THE WORKING GROUP.
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